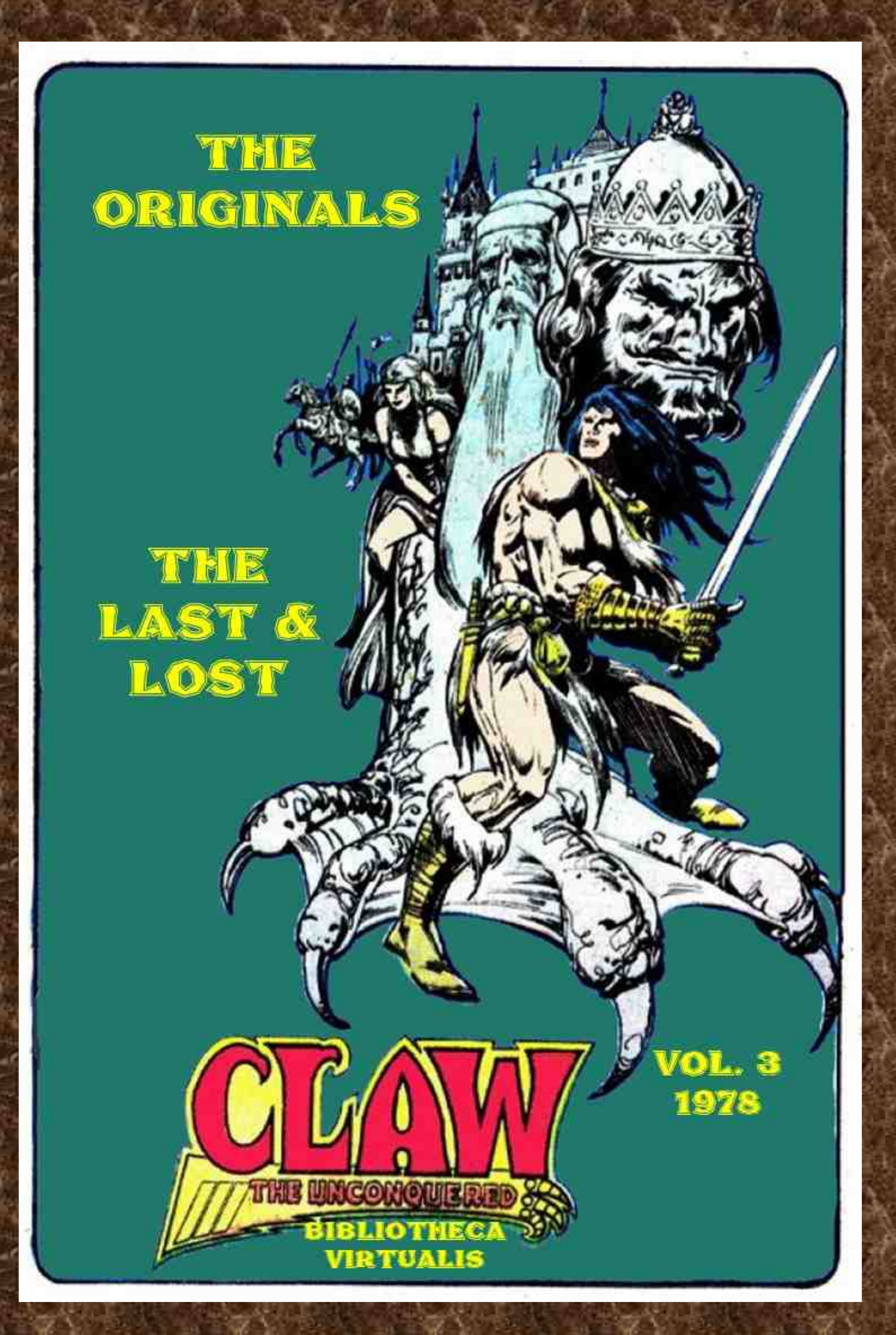

THE
ORIGINALS
THE
LAST &
LOST
CLAW
THE UNCONQUERED
VOL. 3
1978
BIBLIOTHECA
VIRTUALIS



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Les industries qui vendent du rêve comme le cinéma, les jeux vidéos ou en l'occurrence les comics ne sont pas pour autant un monde de bisounours. Il faut lire *Men of Tomorrow : Geeks Gangsters and the Birth of the Comic Book* de Gerard Jones (Basic Books –2004) pour constater que dès ses débuts les comics sont un monde cruel et sans pitié. Il faut rappeler que Malcolm Wheeler-Nicholson, le fondateur de ce qui allait devenir DC Comics, fut éjecté brutalement par ses propres associés. Ceux-ci lui dirent qu'il paraissait bien fatigué et qu'il méritait d'aller se reposer une quinzaine avec sa femme. Au retour de sa courte croisière, il n'était plus chez lui !

Il faut se souvenir que Joe Schuster, l'un des créateurs de Superman, termina sa vie quasi aveugle dans un hospice sans que DC ne lève le petit doigt. Il est vrai que légalement la compagnie ne lui devait plus rien. Seule une campagne de presse la fit revenir sur sa décision pour enfin ouvrir sa bourse.

On pourrait multiplier les exemples comme ces tonnes de papier achetées en douce de façon à créer une pénurie pour faire s'envoler les prix et donc réduire les marges des concurrents voire carrément les mettre dans le rouge. À la fin des années 60 Warren Publishing créa une niche dans le monde des comics : des revues grand format, en noir et blanc et plutôt destinées à des adultes. Brèche dans laquelle s'engouffrèrent de nombreux éditeurs mais Marvel satura le marché en créant quasi simultanément pas moins d'une quinzaine de revues avec les mêmes critères.

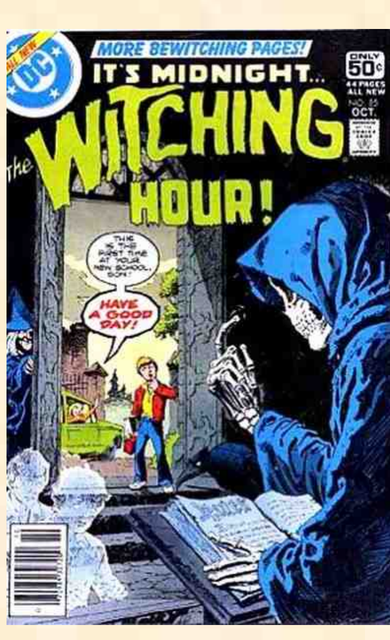
Au début des années 70 Marvel passe devant DC Comics. Outre le fait que ses super-héros sont davantage dans l'air du temps que les Superman et consorts, Marvel a multiplié les séries et dans le lot aussi des méga-succès comme Conan. Dans cette course à l'échalote DC lance alors 16 nouveaux titres pour la seule année 1975. Certes certains ne font pas long feu mais DC en lance 14 autres en 1976 et 4 de mieux en 1977. C'est qu'on a appelé depuis la DC Explosion. Recrutée comme directrice en 1976 à 28 ans avec comme seule expérience celle de la presse pour enfants, Jennette Kahn poursuivit et amplifia le mouvement initié par d'autres. Sans résultats réellement probants, au contraire. L'actionnaire, Warner, voit rouge car les comptes sont de la même couleur. La jeune femme tente un dernier gambit et passe le prix des plusieurs revues de 35 à 50 cents tout en augmentant de 8 pages les journaux. Le public ne mord pas à l'hameçon et l'actionnaire prend la tronçonneuse.

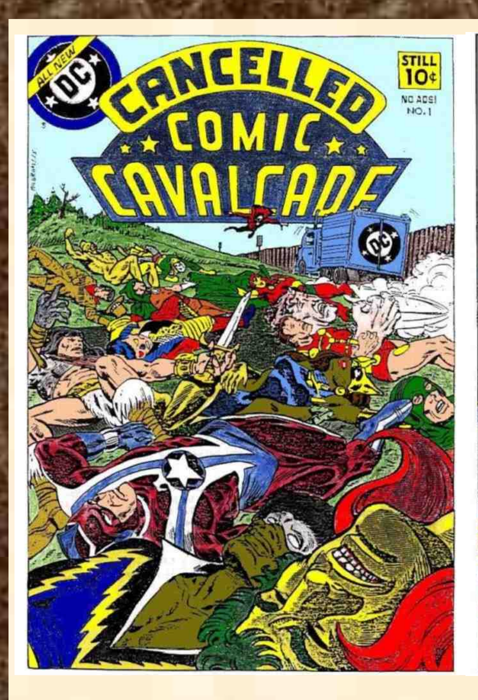
40% du personnel est viré, des titres qui faisaient partie de l'histoire de DC sont supprimés comme *Our Fighting Forces*, (181 #), *House of Secrets* (154 #), *Showcase (*104 #), *The Witching Hour* (85#), *All-Star Comics* (74 #), *Kamandi* (59 #), etc. Nombre de créations plus récentes telles *Claw* (12 #) ou *Batman Family* (20 #) passent également à la trappe. Avant ce grand massacre il avait également été décidé d'abandonner des titres comme *Challengers of the Unknown* (87 #), *Aquaman* (63 #), *Metal Men* (56 #) etc. Sans compter tous les projets qui furent abandonnés sine die.

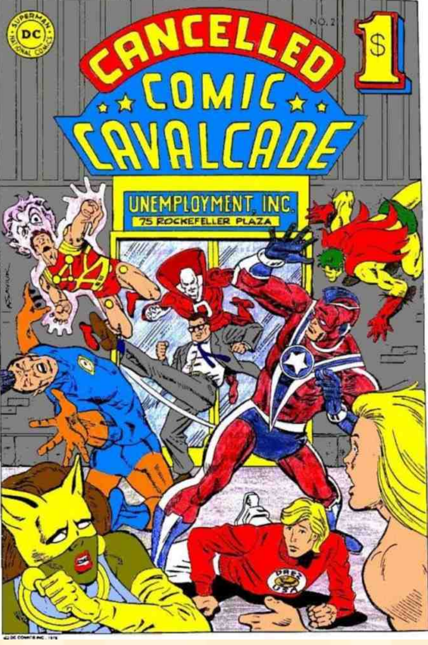
En tout un trentaine de titres et une dizaine de projets disparurent du jour au lendemain et quand on dit du jour au lendemain c'est vraiment du jour au lendemain.











Du coup bon nombres d'histoires pourtant écrites et dessinées ne sont jamais parues. Dans un ultime pied de nez ces pages furent assemblées et photocopiées dans deux faux numéros de 200 pages chacun intitulés *Cancelled Comics Cavalcade.*

Le numéro le plus à gauche montre tous ces cadavres de héros avec le camion DC qui s'enfuit au loin en abandonnant sauvagement tous ces corps dans nature.

Celui de droite n'est pas plus tendre non puisqu'on les voit avec quelques dessinateurs être dégagés avec un coup de pied aux fesses. L'entreprise étant appelé Unemployment Inc avec l'adresse du 75 Rockfeller Plaza c'est à dire celle de DC.

C'est ce que l'histoire a retenu comme la DC Implosion.

Il faut imaginer la rage des dessinateurs et scénaristes licenciés séance tenante, qui, à la hâte, assemblent ces derniers témoignages de leur savoir-faire. Internet est encore à créer et les scans de bureaux aussi. Ce sera donc des photocopies et un tirage de 35 exemplaires seulement. Pour qui cherche, ces revues sont aujourd'hui disponibles sur le net. Malheureusement il s'agit souvent de photocopies de photocopies et la qualité n'est pas au rendez-vous.

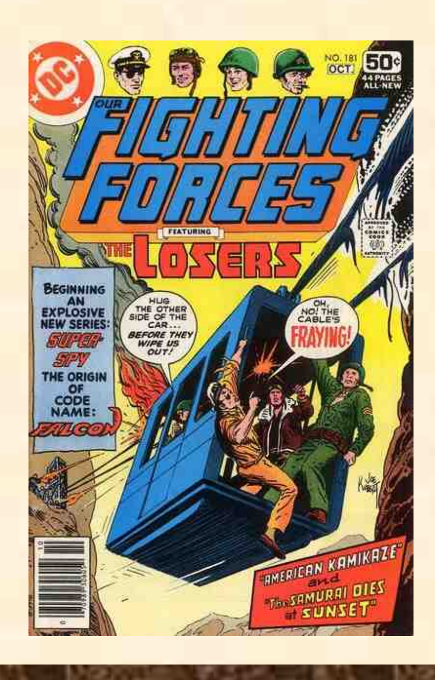
Dans le cadre de cette intégrale de *Claw The Unconquered* il a semblé néanmoins pertinent de vous offrir les deux numéros qui étaient prévus et n'ont pas vu le jour.

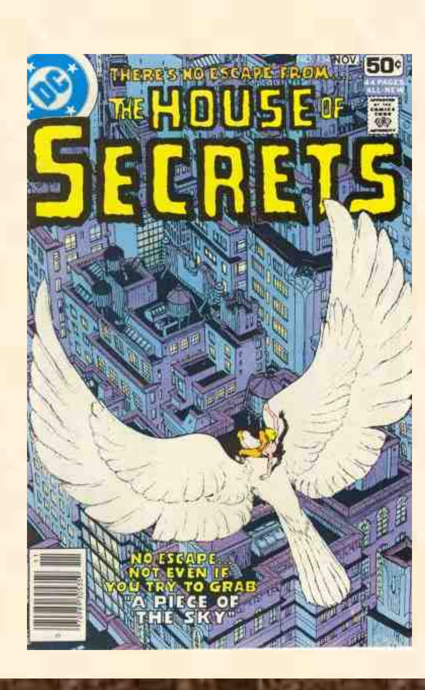
Quant à Jennette Kahn qui avait piloté la DC Explosion puis DC Implosion, elle fut également remerciée mais pas comme les artistes puisqu'en 1981 elle fut promue présidente de DC Comics. Comprenne qui pourra.

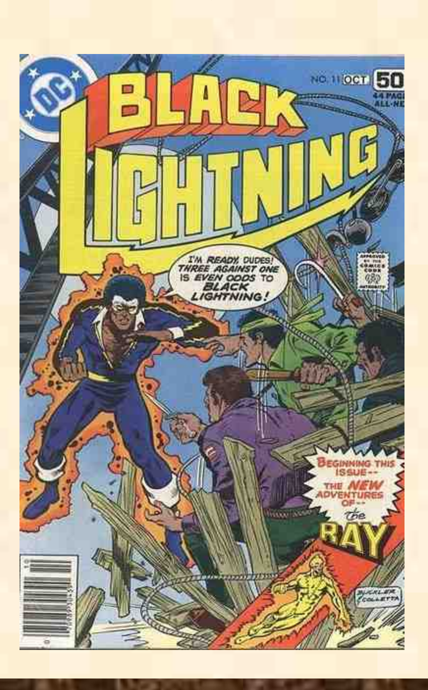
Mais il est temps de vous laisser avec cette page d'Histoire.

De profundis.

Garches, le 4 novembre 2022







CLAW #15 OCT-NOV 35327 (1) OF 25

CLAW THE UNCONQUERED



P-PLEASE, GENTLEMEN, Y-YOU'RE DRUNK, AND--

NONSENSE, BARKEEP! WE'RE MERELY TRYING TO FIND WHY A MAN OF SUCH OBVIOUS SKILLS WOULD COME TO OUR POOR VILLAGE. COULD IT BE, PERHAPS, TO SEEK A PARTNER FOR WASHING HANDS? HEH HEH!

OR MAYBE KEE KEE HE'S LOOKING FOR A... A HANDOUT! HA HA HO HO HO!

CLAW THE UNCONQUERED [illegible] 1978. Published bi-monthly by DC COMICS INC. [illegible]


WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR, SCUM, IS A LITTLE PEACE AND QUIET!!
AND IF I CAN'T FIND THAT PRECIOUS COMMODITY--
SHWAKOO


CLAW #13 OCT-NOV I 5337 3 OF 25
3
--THEN BY THE GODS--
--I'LL JUST HAVE TO MAKE IT!
THE TRAVELERS OF DARK DESTINY
AN ADVENTURE IN HEROIC FANTASY BY:
DAVID MICHELINIE - WRITER
ROMEO TANGHAL & BOB SMITH - ARTISTS
SHELLY LEFERMAN - LETTERER
MARIO SEN - COLORIST
LARRY HAMA - EDITOR


46


THE ONLY THING YOU'LL MAKE, OUTLANDER, IS AN UGLY CORPSE!
AAASH


VERY WELL, CURS. YOU HAD FAIR WARNING! NOW YOU'LL FIND THAT BOTHERSOME GNATS--


--ARE MEANT TO BE SWATTED!


P-PLEASE! I-I DON'T WANT ANY TROUBLE--!
'TIS NO TROUBLE, BARKEEP! IN FACT, I ENJOY TEACHING PESTS LIKE THESE A LESSO--


AAAGHH


WHAT'S THE MATTER, LONGHAIR? FORGET YOU NO LONGER HAVE A HAND ON THAT STUMP?

CAW #13 OCT-NOV J-5327 (5) OF 25

6

SO, WHY DON'T YOU SQUEAL FOR US, PIG! COME ON, SQUEA--

--EEAAAAAA!

THOVAN! H-HE'S KILLED OUR BROTHER, THOVAN!

DAMN YOU, BARBARIAN!

DAMN YOU!

BRAM






7
--TRYSANNDA!
"TRYSANNDA". THE NAME IS LYRICAL, AND IT FLOWS... GENTLY, LIKE THE SILVER-SOFT GOWN DRAPING THE FRAGILE FIGURE STANDING IN THE DOORWAY...
BUT WHILE THAT FORM MAY SUGGEST VULNERABILITY, THE QUICK GLANCE FROM DARTING VIOLET EYES HINTS AT HIDDEN UNSPOKEN STRENGTHS...
...STRENGTHS THAT, IF THE QUICK SHUDDERS OF STARTLED BRAWLERS ARE TO BE CONSIDERED, ARE BEST LEFT TO THEIR HIDING PLACES...


STAY OUT OF THIS, WOMAN! 'TIS NO CONCERN OF YOURS!
INJUSTICE IS ALWAYS MY CONCERN, KYRGLIS-- I WOULD THINK YOU'D KNOW THAT BY NOW.


BUT, IF SOME PERSUASION IS NEEDED...?
THE THREAT IS A VAGUE ONE...


...ITS EFFECTS, HOWEVER, ARE NOT...
UH, NO, I- I DON'T THINK THAT WILL BE NECESSARY! WE'LL GO!
WHAT--? B-BUT, WHAT ABOUT THOVAN? WHAT ABOUT--


SHUT UP, BOY! I SAID WE'D GO!
I'M GRATEFUL, WOMAN--AND IMPRESSED. THOSE LOUTS SEEM TO SHOW YOU A GREAT DEAL OF RESPECT.
AYE, IT USED TO BE THAT. BUT NOW I'D BEST SEE TO YOUR HAND.


I'M NO PHYSICIAN, BUT I DO HAVE CERTAIN TALENTS THAT--
--OH, I-I DIDN'T REALIZE...


DID YOU LOSE IT... IN A WAR?
A WAR? AYE, OF A SORT...
FOR A MOMENT, ICE-BLUE EYES GLINT WITH IRONY....



--AS A MIND WEARY AND WORN SIFTS BACK TO A CLEARING SHORT DAYS BEFORE--
--WHERE A BAND OF HEARTLESS MERCENARIES HAD STOLEN THE CRIMSON, DRACULUM GAUNTLET FROM CLAW'S TWISTED RIGHT HAND...
AT THE TIME, HE MIGHT HAVE STOPPED THEM--BUT CHOSE NOT TO...
...FEELING LITTLE DESIRE TO RECOVER A SHEATH OF SUPER-NATURAL METAL LINKING HIM TO GODS WHO WOULD MAKE HIM A PAWN...



HOWEVER, THAT GAUNTLET ALSO SERVED AS A SHIELD AGAINST THE INFLUENCE OF DEMON BLOOD FLOWING IN HIS HAND--
--AND WITHOUT IT, CLAW HAD FOUND HIMSELF POSSESSED, FILLED WITH A BLOODLUST BEYOND HUMAN KEN...



...AN IMPLACABLE THIRST THAT HAD CULMINATED IN THE SLAYING OF AN UNARMED, SURRENDERING SOLDIER--
--ONE WHO HAD PREVIOUSLY SPARED CLAW'S LIFE...



A WAR? YES...BUT ONE IN WHICH THE ENEMY WAS CLAW HIMSELF...
...AND THE VICTOR--



--WAS THE ONE WHO LOST!
THUMP


CLAW #13 OCT/NOV J-5327 ⑨ OF 25
11
AND NOW...
THERE, THE DRESSING IS CRUDE, BUT SHOULD SUFFICE.
YOU'RE OVERLY MODEST. I DON'T KNOW HOW, BUT THE PAIN IS COMPLETELY GONE! IF THERE'S ANYTHING I CAN DO TO REPAY YOU...?
ACTUALLY, THERE IS ONE SMALL FAVOR YOU MIGHT PERFORM... YOU CAN HELP ME--
--KILL A MAN!
EH?
AYE, FOR IN TRUTH 'TWAS NOT CHANCE THAT BROUGHT ME HERE. I HEARD THERE WAS A STRANGER IN THE VILLAGE, AND I SOUGHT YOU OUT!
FOR THERE IS A MAN OF UNIMAGINABLE EVIL WHO MUST BE DESTROYED! AND WHILE I, MYSELF, AM INCAPABLE OF TAKING HUMAN LIFE, I THOUGHT--
I'M SORRY, GIRL, BUT THERE ARE MANY EVIL MEN IN THIS LAND--
--AND I AM A WARRIOR, NOT A MURDERER.
OH. I-- I SEE...
AGAIN, I APPRECIATE YOUR AID, AND REGRET THAT WE MUST PART BEFORE I CAN--


CLAW #3 OCT/NOV J-5327 (10) OF 25


UH, HOWEVER...


...AS LONG AS WE'RE GOING IN THE SAME DIRECTION, I, UM, SEE NO REASON FOR US NOT TO KEEP EACH OTHER COMPANY...
AND THUS DO THE NEW COMPANIONS DEPART--


--WHILE WITHIN MOMENTS OF THEIR LEAVING...
A DRINK--QUICKLY! THE STRONGEST YOU'VE GOT!


WHAT IS IT, CHIM? WHAT'S WRONG?
O-ON THE TRAIL! J-JUST SOUTH OF THE VILLAGE! I SAW...I--I SAW...
BLAST IT, MAN, GIVE ME THAT DRINK!


NOW CALM DOWN, CHIM! WE'VE HAD ENOUGH EXCITEMENT HERE FOR ONE DAY!
AYE, 'TWAS ONLY JUST BEFORE YOU CAME BELLOWIN' IN WE HAD A BRAWL--AND ALL BECAUSE OF A MAN WHAT ONLY HAD ONE HAND!


ONE--WHICH HAND, MAN? WHICH HAND WAS MISSING?
WHY, UH, TH-THE RIGHT ONE, I BELIEVE!
THE RIGHT--


OH...MY...DEAR...SOUL...


BUT EVEN IN A WORLD BEYOND TIME, DAYS PASS -- DAYS THAT CARRY CLAW OF PYTHARIA AND THE SILVER-HAIRED TRYSANNDA ON A WINDING PATH THROUGH--
--THE SLITHERING HILLS, WHERE AN UNSPEAKABLE TOLL MUST BE PAID TO SEGMENTED GUARDIANS--


--THE CAVERN OF CLAY GHOSTS, WHERE ROCKS HAVE EYES, AND THE BLIND SEE INTO OTHER WORLDS--


--THE OCEAN OF LIVING LIGHT, WHERE A SHIP OF SPUN CRYSTAL CLEAVES WAVES THAT SING AND LAUGH AND SHINE--


--AND, AS NIGHT CRAWLS ITS UMBRAL WAY TO DAWN, TO THE GLASS DESERT OF MA'IIB, A VAST SCAR OF BLASTED SAND WHERE BONES SPROUT FROM BRITTLE CREVICES--


CLAW #13 OCT/NOV J-5827 (16) OF 25
16
--AND FEAR SWELLS LIKE A TIDE, THICK AND DEEP...
WHAT'S THE MATTER, LORD CLAW? YOU SEEM... RESTLESS.
AYE, TRYSANNDA. I DON'T LIKE THIS PLACE.
I LIKE NOT THE FEATHERED WATCHERS, NOR THEIR PERCHES.
BUT WHAT MAKES ME MOST UNEASY IS--
THERE! DID YOU HEAR IT? A SCRABBLING SOUND-- AS IF SOMEONE FOLLOWS!
BE CALM, CLAW-- I HEAR NOTHING. PERHAPS 'TIS SOME TRICK OF THE SHIFTING GLASS.
BUT THE SUN IS RISING, AND SOON WE'LL REACH THE SHORE. WE CAN REST THERE.
AYE. PERHAPS YOU'RE RIGHT. I AM TIRED FROM THIS WALKING. IN FACT, MY LEGS ALMOST FEEL AS IF THEY'RE--
--MIRED?
TH-THE GLASS! THE SUNLIGHT IS MELTING
2


CLAW #13 OCT/NOV J-5327 (13) OF 25
17
THOSE BONES MUST BE THE REMAINS OF PREVIOUS TRAVELERS WHO WERE CAUGHT!
AYE! AND UNLESS WE WANT TO JOIN THEM, WE'D BEST REACH THE SHORE BEFORE--
AGGH!
SHRIPP
CURSE ME FOR A FOOL! I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN THOSE WINGED DEMONS WERE HERE FOR A REASON!
THIS "DESERT" IS THEIR DINING HALL!
AN INTERESTING THEORY, BARBARIAN...
...AND ONE THAT IS SOON SHOWN TO BE HORRIBLY, SICKENINGLY--


18
--TRUE!
SOTH!
GET AWAY FROM ME, YOU FILTHY SCAVENGERS!
AWAY!
AWAY!
IT'S NO USE! I-I CAN'T HOLD THEM OFF!
RUN, TRYSANNDA! I'LL TRY TO KEEP THEM FROM YOU AS LONG AS I--
TRYSANNDA...?
BUT THE PALE WOMAN DOESN'T HEAR... FOR SHE IS ABSORBED IN THE MUTTERING OF EVEN PALER WHISPERS, AND THE MAKING OF GESTURES BOTH BEAUTIFUL AND BIZARRE...


23
...GESTURES THE RESULTS OF WHICH...
...PROVE TO BE MOST--
--STUNNING!
TH-THE BIRDS! THEIR FEATHERS HAVE TURNED...TO FROST!
B-BUT, HOW--?!
NEVER MIND THAT--GET TO THE SHORE! THE MIST WILL FOLLOW US!
INDEED IT DOES...
...AND AFTER THE SHORT JOURNEY HAS BEEN MADE IN SAFETY...
WE'LL REST HERE (PUFF) FOR A MOMENT, GIRL, AND THEN--
--I'VE A FEW QUESTIONS TO ASK YOU...

CLAW #13 OCT/NOV 55327 (16) OF 26 24












"FOR THE VILLAGE WHERE WE MET WAS ONCE MY HOME..."
"...A PLACE WHERE, THROUGH THE JUSTIFICATION OF BIRTH, I WAS A MEMBER OF NOBILITY, AND WAS TREATED WITH HONOR AND RESPECT..."
"UNTIL THE DAY WHEN CHAOS LASHED FROM THE SKIES, SCATHING THE VILLAGE WITH FIRE AND ARCANE ENERGIES--"
"--THE PRODUCTS OF SOME UNKNOWN CONFLICT IN AN INTERSECTING DIMENSION..."
"FOR WEEKS MY PEOPLE LIVED IN DREAD AND MISERY AND, LIKE SOME DOTING PARENT, I PITIED THEM... AND WISHED TO EASE THEIR SUFFERING..."
"THUS IT WAS THAT I SOUGHT OUT A MIGHTY WIZARD, AND BARGAINED FOR THE POWER WITH WHICH TO SAVE THE VILLAGE..."
"THE PRICE HE ASKED WAS INHUMAN--REPULSIVE BEYOND IMAGINING! AND OF COURSE, I AGREED..."
"IT WAS, AFTER ALL, FOR MY PEOPLE..."


CLAW #13 OCT/NOV J-5327 (18) OF 25
2
"RETURNING TO THE VILLAGE, I PUT MY NEWLY-ACQUIRED ABILITIES TO THE TEST--"
"--AND WITH AS MUCH SURPRISE AS SATISFACTION, I SUCCEEDED IN CLOSING THE DIMENSIONAL BREACH!"
"HOWEVER, AFTER WITNESSING MY SORCERY, THE SUPER-STITIOUS VILLAGERS CONSIDERED ME AS MUCH A MENACE AS THE MANIFESTATIONS I HAD BANISHED!"
"AND THUS I FOUND MYSELF AN OUTCAST AMONG THE VERY PEOPLE I HAD SAVED..."
"IT WAS THEN THAT THE PRICE OF MY BARGAIN BE-GAN TO WEIGH UPON ME, AND I OFFERED A REWARD TO ANYONE WHO WOULD SLAY THE WIZARD..."
THERE WERE NO TAKERS...
I'M SORRY, GIRL, BUT WHAT COULD POSSIBLY BE SO FEARSOME?
YOU, LORD CLAW, WERE MY FINAL HOPE. AND NOW, I GO TO FULFILL MY PART OF THE AGREEMENT.
TRYSANNDA?
BUT THE SAD-EYED LADY'S ONLY ANSWER IS SILENCE-- AND THUS THE DAY DIES MUTELY...

AND AT SUNFALL...

I'M AFRAID OUR PATHS MUST PART TOMORROW, TRYSANNCA. I TRY TO MAKE A HABIT OF AVOIDING WIZARDS WHENEVER POSS!--

--EH? THAT SOUND! THAT SAME SOUND! SOMETHING IN THE BUSHES--!

COME OUT, CURSE YOU! SHOW YOUR-SELF!

SKASHASH

PLEASE, CLAW--DON'T! THERE...THERE'S NOTHING THERE!







CLAW #13 OCT/NOV JE327 30 of 25 30

AND EVENTUALLY, WHEN THAT MOON HAS BEEN DEVOURED BY ANOTHER DAWN...

HMPH! IT'S BEEN SO LONG SINCE I'VE SLEPT ON A PROPER PILLOW THAT I'M BEGINNING TO GET SADDLE SORES ON MY--

--HEAD? OH SOTH... OH DEAR SOTH NO!

CLAW! WHAT--?

THE HAND! THE DAMNABLE HAND!

IT'S COME BACK!

THIS CURSED MONSTROSITY HAS A LIFE OF ITS OWN! I CAN KEEP LOPPING IT OFF TO ETERNITY--

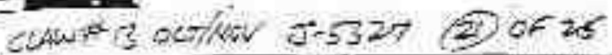
--BUT I CAN NEVER ESCAPE IT! I--

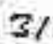
THE THIEVES! I-I HAVE TO FIND THE THIEVES! GET THE GAUNTLET BACK BEFORE—

CLAW, WAIT--!

I CAN'T WAIT! THIS...THIS THING CAN TAKE CONTROL OF ME, MAKE ME KILL WHOEVER IT WISHES! FRIENDS, ENEMIES--MAYBE EVEN YOU! YOU DON'T KNOW--




CLAW #13 OCT/NOV S-5327 (21) OF 26


31


SWEATING, HIS FUR-TUFTED FINGERS CLUTCHING CONVULSIVELY, CLAW WATCHES--
--AS VIOLET EYES GROW HAZY, SOFT LIPS WHISPER, AND PALE HANDS MIX GLITTERING POWDERS--


--UNTIL AT LAST...
IT IS DONE!


QUICKLY, CLAW, SADDLE YOUR MOUNT! THE FINDER WILL LEAD US TO WHAT WE SEEK!


THE COLD-EYED OUTLANDER DOESN'T UNDERSTAND THE SLENDER GIRL'S MAGIC-- BUT HIS ALTERNATIVES ARE WOEFULLY FEW. AND SO HE FOLLOWS THE GLIMMERING "FINDER"...
...THROUGH FORESTS, THROUGH LOWLANDS...


...TO NIGHTMARE!
BY THE GODS!


CLAW #13 OCT/NOV J-5327 (22) OF 25
32
CLAW! THIS ONE'S STILL ALIVE!
"C...CLAW?" 'TWOULD SEEM, THEN .. THAT FATE HAS ITS -KOFF- FINAL JEST!
FORGET FATE, MAN-- WHERE'S THE GAUNTLET?
WHERE YOU'LL NEVER...GET TO IT...I'D WAGER...
"...FOR KNOWING THE GLOVE...HAD OCCULT ORIGINS ...WE BROUGHT IT TO CASTLE RAVENROOST--"
"--AND THERE SOUGHT TO SELL IT... TO THE CASTLE'S MASTER..."
"A MAN OF GREAT WEALTH... AND GREAT EVIL! A HULKING BRUTE OF A SORCERER CALLED..."
"...DALIVAR THE UNETHICAL!
"BUT THOUGH DALIVAR'S SMILE... COULD CHILL A FLAME..."


"AND THIS TO CELEBRATE OUR GOOD FORTUNE... WE REVELED THROUGH THE NIGHT... AND MUCH ALE WAS DRUNK..."


"SO MUCH THAT NONE OF US WERE AWAKE... WHEN THE GOLD COINS... TURNED INTO SLITHERING, BLOOD-SUCKING MONSTERS...!"


"THOUGH WE ALL FOUND OUT... SOON ENOUGH...!"

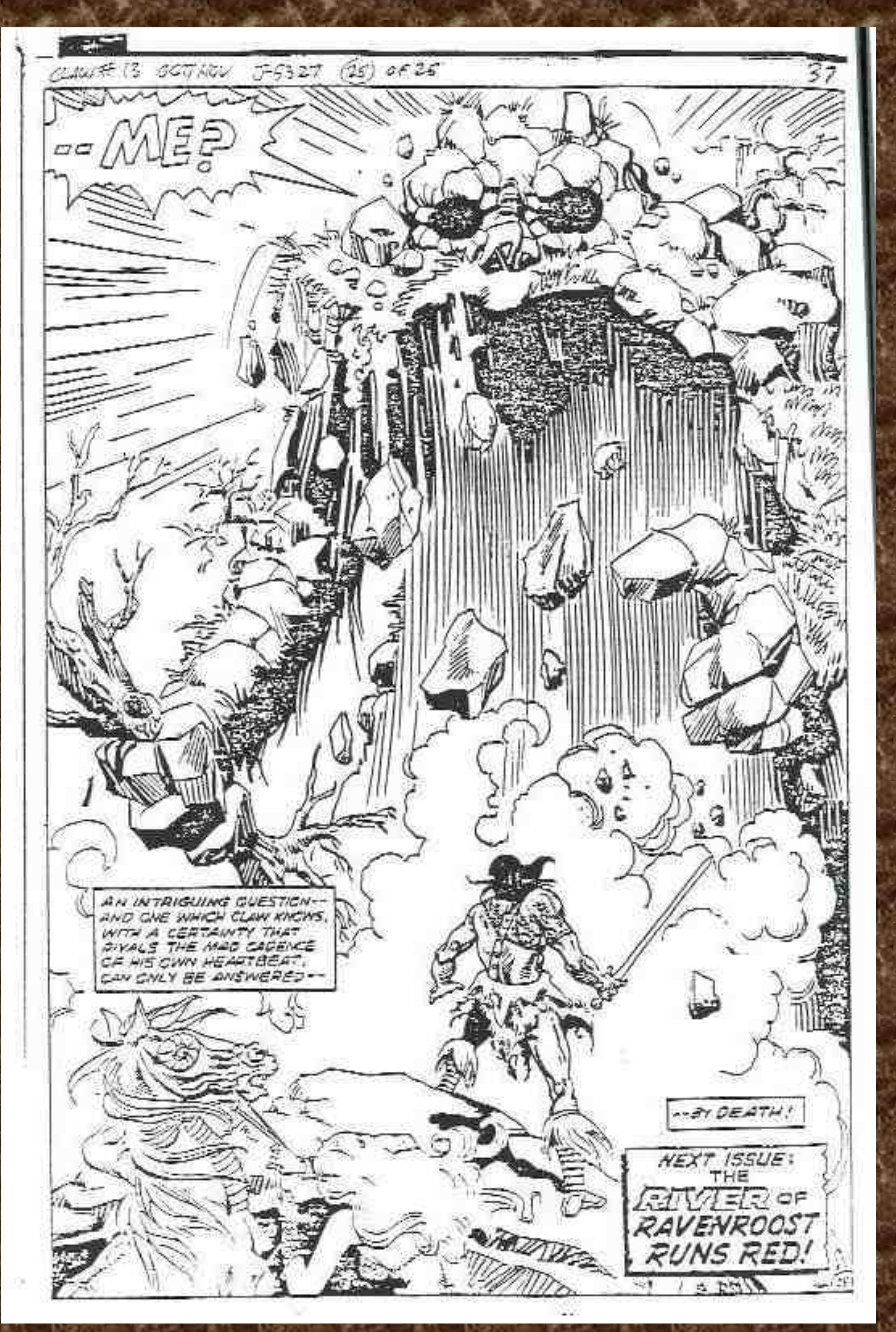

AND UNLESS YOU WISH TO MEET... THE SAME END... HEED THE WORDS OF A DYING MAN--
--LEAVE... THE GAUNTLET... ALONE...


IT'S A PITY HE DIED WITHOUT KNOWING HOW WRONG HE WAS.
WRONG? ABOUT WHAT?

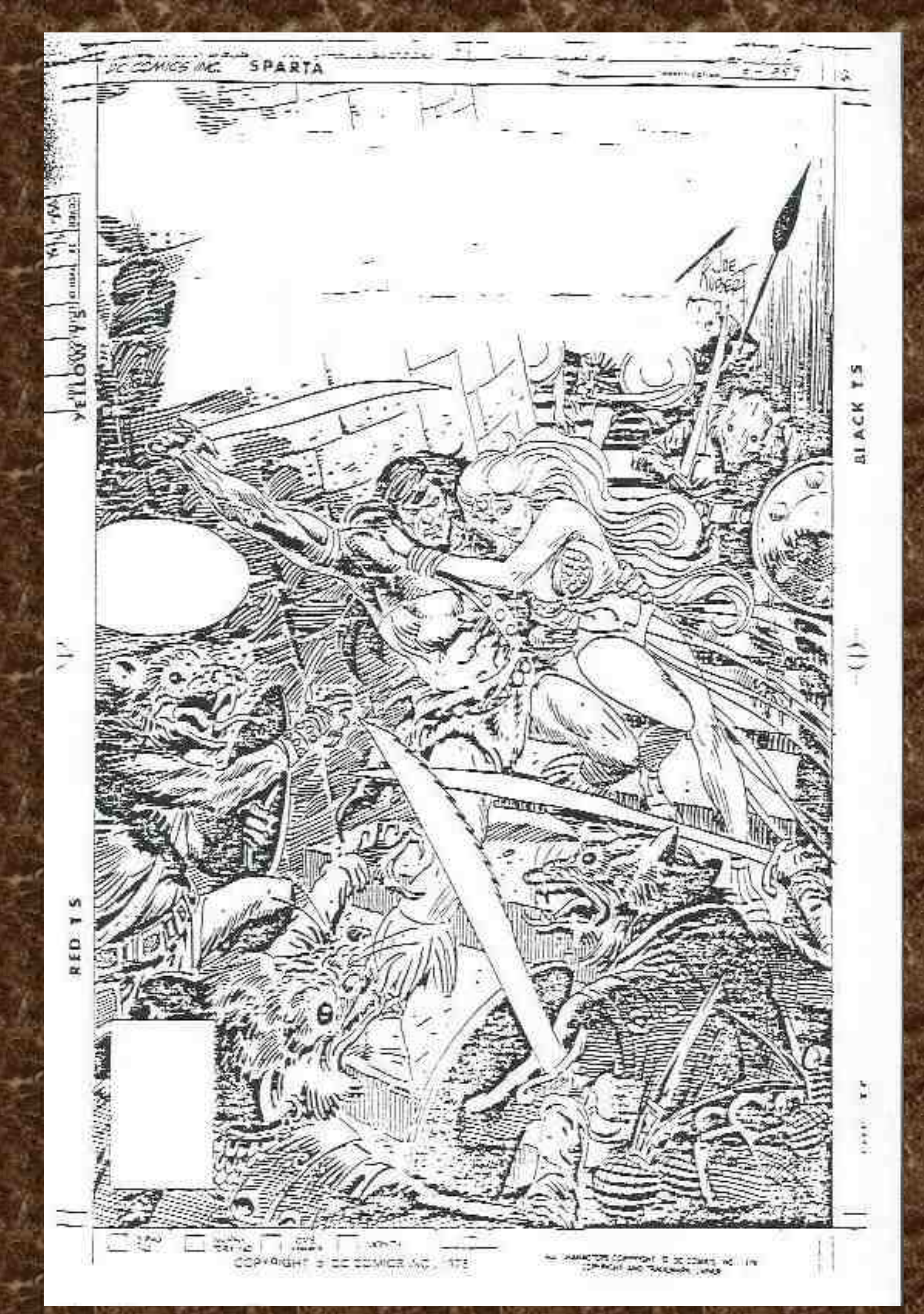

ABOUT "FATE'S FINAL JEST". YOU SEE, THE MAN I WANTED TO KILL--THE WIZARD WITH WHOM I MADE MY BARGAIN--
--GALIVAR THE UNETHICAL!
AND NOW IT IS CLAW'S TURN TO REMAIN SILENT...


...AS ONCE AGAIN THE TWO TRAVELERS TAKE TO THEIR HORSE. ONLY THIS TIME IT IS WITH A SINGLE PURPOSE-- AND A SINGLE DESTINATION.


CLAW #13 OCT/NOV J-5327 (24) OF 25
55
RAVENROOST!
IT LOOKS RATHER ...FORMIDABLE.
AYE, BUT 'TWOULD SEEM THE WIZARD IS OVERCONFIDENT IN HIS MANOR'S DISSUASIVE APPEARANCE--
--FOR THERE ARE ONLY A HANDFUL OF GUARDS AT THE GATE!
AND BY KEEPING THAT HILLOCK BETWEEN US AND THEM, GAINING US THE ADVANTAGE OF SURPRISE--
--WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO ROUT THOSE GUARDS WITHOUT MUCH TROU--
RRRUMMBBLLEE
YOU UNDERESTIMATE THE LORD OF RAVENROOST, MORTAL! FOR THOUGH YOU MAY INDEED DEFEAT HIS PUNY SENTINELS--
NNEIGGHH
--HOW CAN YOU POSSIBLY HOPE TO GET PAST--



37
--ME?
AN INTRIGUING QUESTION-- AND ONE WHICH CLAW KNOWS, WITH A CERTAINTY THAT RIVALS THE MAD CADENCE OF HIS OWN HEARTBEAT, CAN ONLY BE ANSWERED--
--BY DEATH!
NEXT ISSUE: THE RIVER OF RAVENROOST RUNS RED!


DC COMICS INC.
SPARTA
YELLOW 1 S
BLACK 1 S
RED 1 S
JOE KUBERT
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PYTHARIA IS A BARREN, BITTER LAND! ONLY SOUR MEN WITH CURDLED SOULS RIPEN IN ITS HARSH CLIME!
THE FROSTY-EYED VALCAN, WHOM MEN CALL CLAW, WAS SPAWNED IN BRUTAL PYTHARIA, AND THAT BARBARIAN INHERITANCE IS FOREVER ETCHED INTO HIS GRIM VISAGE!
COME FORTH, MONSTER... AND MEET YOUR DOOM! I KNOW NOT WHAT DARK, LOATHSOME PIT BIRTHED YOU...
...BUT BE FOREWARNED! NOT EVEN THE WRATH OF THE SEVEN HELLS CAN BAR ME FROM MY QUEST!
TO CASTLE RAVENROOST, CLAW AND THE BEAUTEOUS TRYSANNDA HAVE JOURNEYED -- HE SEEKING THE STOLEN CRIMSON GAUNTLET WHICH ONCE SERVED AS HIS ONLY SHIELD AGAINST THE DEMON INFLUENCE OF HIS HAUNTED, FUR-TUFTED RIGHT HAND -- AND SHE TO REPAY AN UNHOLY DEBT TO THE CASTLE'S REPULSIVE MASTER!

YET, AS THEIR HAZARDOUS TREK NEARS ITS LONG-AWAITED CONCLUSION, IT IS UNEXPECTEDLY... OBSTRUCTED!





YOU MOUTH BRAVE WORDS FOR SO *INSIGNIFICANT* A FLEA!

I SHALL WONDER AT YOUR *BRAVADO* AFTER I HAVE CRUSHED YOUR *SKULL* BENEATH MY HEEL AND SET YOUR BONES *A'BLEACHING* IN THE CRUEL SUN!

WHEN THE RIVER OF RAVENROOST... RAN RED!

HEROIC FANTASY AT ITS FINEST BY/// TOM DEFALCO, WRITER/ ROMEO TANGHAL and BOB SMITH, ARTISTS/ SHELLY LEFERMAN, LETTERER/ COLORIST/ LARRY HAMA, EDITOR// BASED ON CHARACTERS CREATED BY DAVID MICHELINIE






SUCH A BEHEMOTH COULD DRIVE A STRONG MAN TO DRINK!
YET, IT MUST HAVE A WEAKNESS! IT MUST!
PERHAPS HE MAY FALL PREY TO...SORCERY!
AND SO SAYING, THE VIOLET EYES OF THE SILVER WITCH MIST DARKLY, HER PALE SKIN GROWS COLD--
--IN SIBILANT WHISPERS, SHE VOICES FORBIDDEN PHRASES OF FORGOTTEN LORE--
--WHICH PRODUCE EFFECTS BOTH GROTESQUE AND FRIGHTENING--
IF SOMEWHAT IMPOTENT!
HA! HA! METHINKS YOU VERMIN PROVIDE GREAT SPORT! I SHALL GRIEVE AT YOUR DESTRUCTION!
HOWEVER, IN THE NEARBY CASTLE RAVENROOST, THE BATTLE IS OBSERVED BY OTHER EYES--
MASTER, YOUR GUARDIAN FARES WELL! SOON THAT MEDDLESOME BARBARIAN WILL BE NO MORE!
QUITE TRUE! (BURP)
LIKE AN OPULENT FROG, VALIDARR THE UNETHICAL SQUATS UPON HIS SLIMY THRONE!
BUT MY LOVELY TRYSANNOA IS NOT HARMED--
(BURP)--FOR SHE IS TO FURNISH US WITH OTHER, MORE DELIGHTFUL PLEASURES!
"SEE THAT HER BODY IS SECURED FOR ME!"
"AS YOU WISH, MASTER!"


MEANWHILE, CLAW HAS SAVAGELY RENEWED HIS ATTACK...
CURSE YOU, DIRT-MONSTER!
WHY DON'T YOU FALL??
I CANNOT BELIEVE THAT YOU ARE TRULY INVINCIBLE--
--FOR EVEN THE GODS THEMSELVES ARE SAID TO HAVE SOFT UNDERBELLIES!
I AM NO GOD, IRREVERENT ONE-- MERELY THE HUMBLE SERVANT OF THE DARK RULERS OF ALL CHAOS-- THE SHADOW-GODS!
(UGH) HE TOSSES ME ASIDE AS ONE WOULD BRUSH OFF AN INSECT!
IT IS THEY WHO CONSTANTLY RENEW MY ALMIGHTY STRENGTH...
--FOR SO LONG AS MY FEET DO STAND ON SOLID GROUND!
SOLID GROUND???


6
BAH! I GROW WEARY OF YOUR FUTILE STRUGGLING!
I WISH TO ENJOY THE REMAINING SUNLIGHT IN A RESTFUL STATE!
I HOPE YOU ARE AT PEACE WITH YOUR ANCESTORS--FOR YOU'RE ABOUT TO JOIN THEM!
UNNH
IN THE EVER-TIGHTENING GRIP, THE DARK-MANED OUTLANDER FEELS HIS OWN DEATH APPROACHING--
AND HE LIKES IT NOT!
ARRRGGG!!!
IN A WORD, CLAW GOES... MAD!
SUDDENLY, THE MOST CHILLING FORCES OF BLACKEST MYSTICISM ENTER THE FRAY...


7


--THE HELL-BORN FURY OF THE DRAGON-PAW STRIKES!
WRRSS

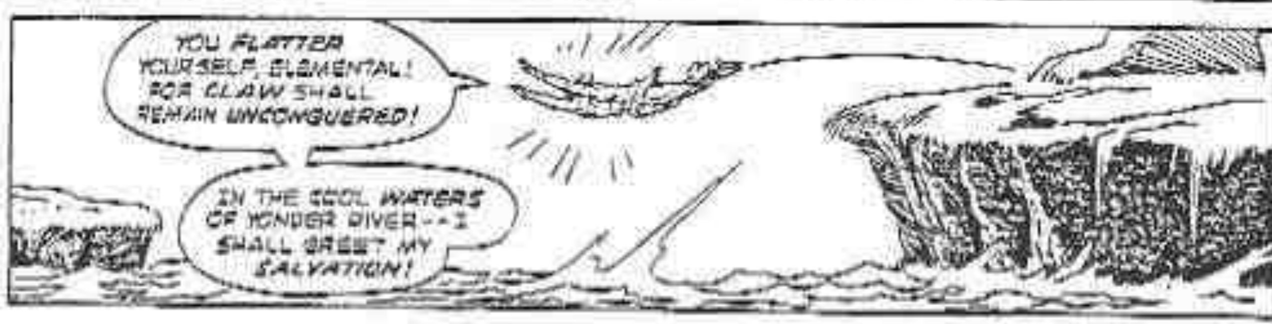

YYIII!!! MY FACE! ACCURSED WIZARDRY!
FOR THE FIRST TIME IN UNTOLD EONS, I BURN WITH UNACCUSTOMED AGONY!


SO MY DEMON HAND CAN HURT YOU!
DID MY TWISTED PAW TRULY SAVE ME, OR AM I MERELY A PAWN IN ITS THIRST FOR DEATH AND DESTRUCTION?


SORCEROUS SWINE! FOR THE EFFRONTERIES CAST UPON ME -- YOUR DEATH WILL BE TERRIBLE TO BEHOLD!
THAT IS...IF YOU CAN CATCH ME!


SO! THE HOT, FETID BREATH OF MY RIGHTEOUS INDIGNATION CAUSES YOU TO REVEAL YOUR TRUE SKITTISH SPIRIT--
--FOR ALL YOUR POMPOUS ARROGANCE, YOU ARE NOUGHT BUT A FAINT-HEARTED CRAVEN!


FLY NO MORE, DASTARDLY ONE! NOWHERE SHALL YOU FIND SUCCOUR!
YOUR DOOM IS IRREVOCABLE!


YOU FLATTER YOURSELF, ELEMENTAL! FOR CLAW SHALL REMAIN UNCONQUERED!
IN THE COOL WATERS OF YONDER RIVER--I SHALL GREET MY SALVATION!


THEN THAT ENCOUNTER MUST BE FOREVER DENIED YOU!
SOTH! MERE INCHES AWAY— VICTORY HAS BEEN PLUCKED FROM ME!


BUT--
AAIEEE! I HAVE OVER-REACHED MYSELF!
MY BALANCE CRUMBLES! GODS OF DARKNESS, PLEASE...
...HELP MEEEEE!
SPLASH


CLAW
9
BASE TRICKERY! NO LONGER DO MY FEET REST UPON THE STRENGTH-GIVING SOIL!
NO LONGER DO THE GODS RENEW ME.
THE RAGING WATERS DO DISRUPT MY CORPOREAL FORM-- RENDING ME-- TEARING ME ASUNDER--
--UNTIL I AM... NO MOREEEEEE
YET, EVEN AS THE LIVING MOUNTAIN PERISHES--ERODING AT THE HANDS OF THE RUSHING RIVER...
--UNTIL THEY ARE BOTH EMBRACED BY THEIR WATERY LOVER!
IT NEVER LOOSENS ITS MUD-RIDDEN GRIP ON CLAW --
OH, MY POOR LORD CLAW...
...TO WHAT CRUEL FATE HAVE I LED YOU?
ONLY A GRIM SILENCE FOLLOWS THE SOUNDS OF BATTLE!


CLAW
10
SUDDENLY, THE SOMBER MUSINGS OF THE CHEERLESS PRINCESS ARE INTERRUPTED AS--
A SHADOW FROM ABOVE! WHAT STALKING THING NOW SEEKS TO ADD TO MY GRIEF?
THE ANSWER TO HER QUESTION IS SHOCKINGLY MADE CLEAR--
--AS THE ENCHANTED TRYSANNDA IS ENGULFED IN A NIGHT-MARE SUPREME!
EACH HAUNTED FACE BEARS THE THREAT OF A THOUSAND THOUSAND TORTURES!
--AND THOUGH SHE FIGHTS WITH A FIERCENESS BORN OF MAD DESPERATION--
--THEY ARE THE DREADED GOBLIN-WARRIORS FROM THE STYGIAN DEPTHS OF CHAOS--
--WHILE SHE, BUT A PAMPERED NOBLEWOMAN!
MEANWHILE--
IN THEIR OWN JESTING WAY, THE GODS MUST SMILE UPON ME--
THOUGH I'VE LOST BOTH MY HORSE AND SWORD, I'VE STILL MY SKIN AND--
10


...TRYSANNDA???

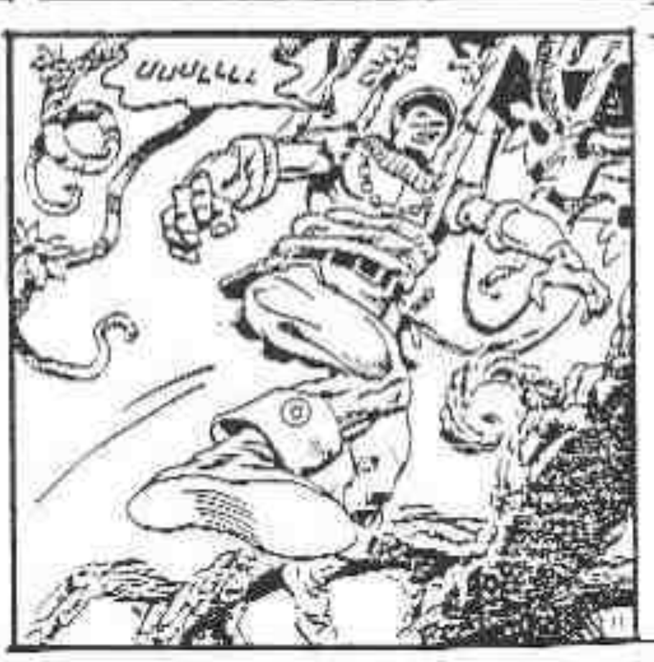





INTERLUDE: TO MAC-FENZEE, THE LAND OF LYRICAL TROLLS--
HURRY, LAD! YOU SAID MY FRIEND CLAW WAS NEAR-BY...HURT, INJURED!*
FEAR NOT, PRINCE GHILKYN--
*SEE LAST ISSUE.


--YOU AND YOUR COMRADE SHALL SOON BE RE-UNITED--


--THOUGH NOT IN A MANNER OF YOUR OWN CHOOSING!
WHA...???


UUULLLL

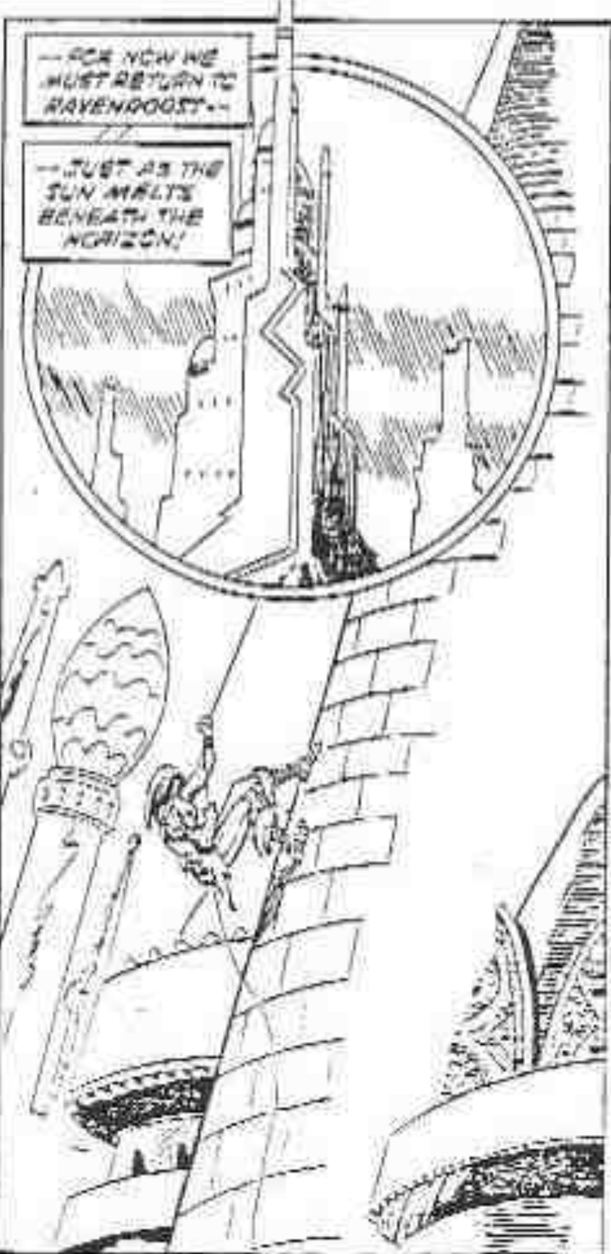
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12


YOU HAVE SERVED THE SHADOW-GODS WELL... AND DESERVE A RICH REWARD!
THANK YOU, MASTER! I LIVE TO SERVE YOU!


NO! YOU DIE TO SERVE US! FOR WE OF CHAOS WORSHIP DEATH AND HAVE NO GREATER PRIZE TO OFFER YOU!


HOWEVER, PRINCE OF A THOUSAND HILLS, THAT PRIZE IS NOT FOR THE LIKES OF YOU!
FOR YOU, THERE ARE OTHER PLANS! OTHER PLANS, INDEED...
JUST WHAT THOSE PLANS ARE, WE SHALL LEARN LATER--


--FOR NOW WE MUST RETURN TO RAVENROOST--
--JUST AS THE SUN MELTS BENEATH THE HORIZON!




CLAW
13
PWAP

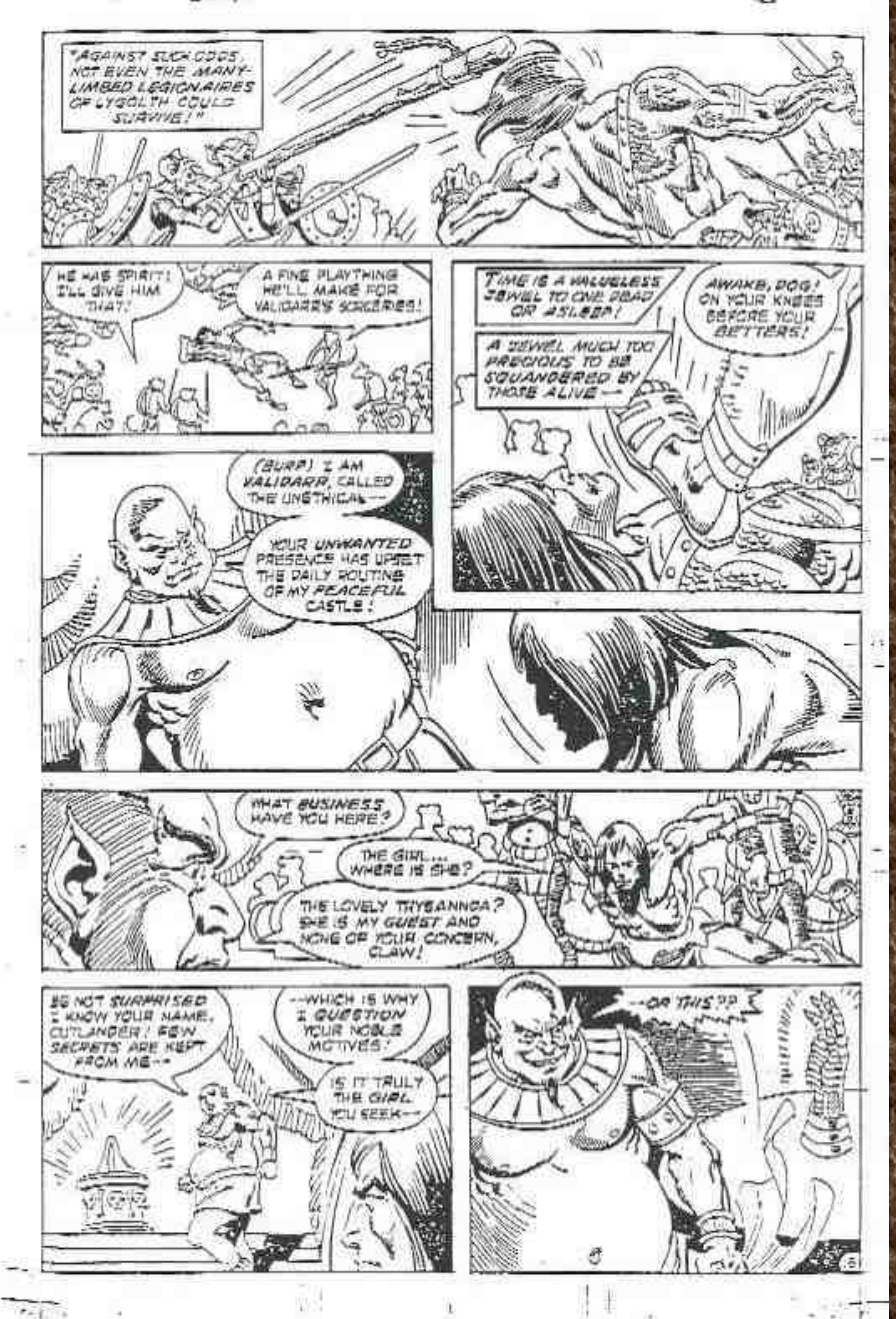
MY PRESENCE WAS BETRAYED BY MY OWN SCHEMING DEVIL-PAW!
GUARDS! GUARDS! WE ARE INVADED!!










"AGAINST SUCH ODDS, NOT EVEN THE MANY-LIMBED LEGIONAIRES OF LYGOLTH COULD SURVIVE!"
HE HAS SPIRIT! I'LL GIVE HIM THAT!
A FINE PLAYTHING HE'LL MAKE FOR VALIDARR'S SORCERIES!
TIME IS A VALUELESS JEWEL TO ONE DEAD OR ASLEEP!
A JEWEL MUCH TOO PRECIOUS TO BE SQUANDERED BY THOSE ALIVE--
AWAKE, DOG! ON YOUR KNEES BEFORE YOUR BETTERS!
(BURP) I AM VALIDARR, CALLED THE UNETHICAL--
YOUR UNWANTED PRESENCE HAS UPSET THE DAILY ROUTINE OF MY PEACEFUL CASTLE!
WHAT BUSINESS HAVE YOU HERE?
THE GIRL... WHERE IS SHE?
THE LOVELY THYSANNOA? SHE IS MY GUEST AND NONE OF YOUR CONCERN, CLAW!
BE NOT SURPRISED I KNOW YOUR NAME, OUTLANDER! FEW SECRETS ARE KEPT FROM ME--
--WHICH IS WHY I QUESTION YOUR NOBLE MOTIVES!
IS IT TRULY THE GIRL YOU SEEK--
--OR THIS??


THE CRIMSON GLOVE IS MADE OF ORACULM... A METAL WITH VERY DISTURBING PROPERTIES! (BURP)
I AM AWARE THAT CERTAIN NOW-DECEASED MERCENARIES APPROPRIATED IT FROM YOU!*
*AS SHOWN IN CLAW #12!


BUT HOW DID YOU, A FILTH-RIDDEN BARBARIAN COME BY IT--
AND WHY DO YOU PURSUE IT? WHAT POWERS DOES IT POSSESS??


IT PROTECTS ME FROM THE GROWING INFLUENCE OF MY EVIL PAW--
BY SHIELDING MY SANITY...AND I MEAN TO HAVE IT BACK!
HE'S FREE!


WITH A BESTIAL GROWL, THE UNTAMED SAVAGE IS UP THE STAIRWAY!
NO ONE CAN KEEP IT FROM ME-- NO ONE!!

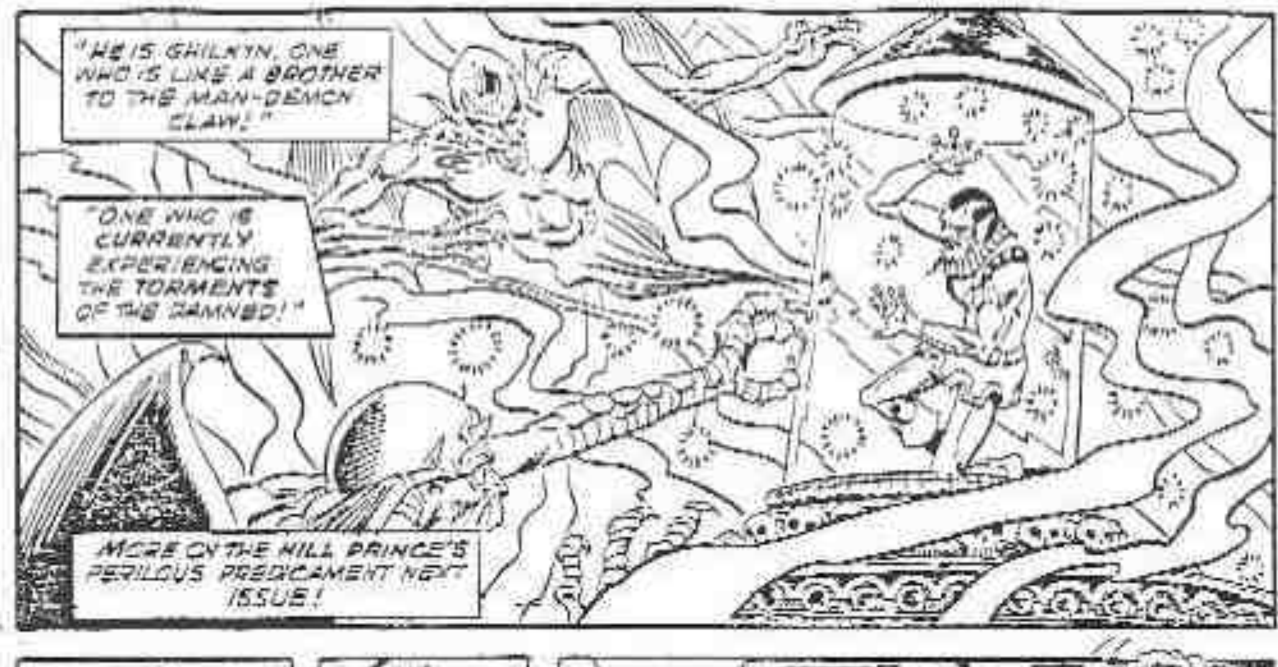

YET, UNHAPPY CLAW LEARNS THAT TO REACH HIS PRIZE IS ONE THING--
--TO POSSESS IT, IS QUITE ANOTHER MATTER INDEED!
--AS FURIOUS BOLTS OF OCCULT ENERGY LACERATE HIS UNPROTECTED BODY!


THE SOUL-SEARING PAIN RIFLES THROUGH THE BARBARIAN UNTIL HIS LEGS BUCKLE BENEATH HIM--
FOOL! DID HE THINK ME SO NAIVE AS TO LEAVE THE GAUNTLET UNPROTECTED?
LET HIM REGAIN HIS WITS IN MY INNERMOST DUNGEON!
SILENTLY, SHE WAITS!
ONCE, WHEN HER LAND HER PEOPLE WERE THREATENED WITH DESTRUCTION--
SHE MADE AN UNHALLOWED BARGAIN TO SAVE THEM!*
*AS RELATED IN OUR LAST ISSUE!


FOR NOW-- I HAVE OTHER PLEASURES TO CONTEND WITH!


EVEN AS THE DOOR TO HER PRISON CREAKS OPEN...
SHE KNOWS HER DREADED DAY OF RECKONING IS AT HAND!
(BURP) TRYSANNDA, COME...


INTERLUDE: THE SWIRLING, CHAOTIC MADLANDS OF THE SHADOW-GODS...
SOON WE MUST RENEW OUR GRAND STRUGGLE AGAINST THE LORDS OF ELDER LIGHT!
KING OCCULAS IS DEAD!* WE NEED A NEW CHAMPION!
I HAVE FOUND THE PERFECT PAWN!
*HE MET HIS END IN CLAW #


"HE IS GHILKYN, ONE WHO IS LIKE A BROTHER TO THE MAN-DEMON CLAW!"
"ONE WHO IS CURRENTLY EXPERIENCING THE TORMENTS OF THE DAMNED!"
MORE ON THE HILL PRINCE'S PERILOUS PREDICAMENT NEXT ISSUE!


AS WE REJOIN CLAW--


ARRGGH!
EASY, FRIEND! THERE'S NO ESCAPE FROM HERE!


HERE WE SHALL WAIT UNTIL VALIDARR'S GOBBLINS COME TO MAIM US!
THEN TO THE PITS, SHALL WE GO!
AIEEE!!!
WHAT...???
JUST AN UNLUCKY SOUL ON THE RACKS!
THEY SAY SHE'S A SPECIAL FAVORITE OF VALIDARR'S...


...A SILVER WITCH!

ELSEWHERE IN DARK RAVENROOST...

PLEASE, TRYSANNOA, NO MORE SCREAMING! YOU'LL FRIGHTEN OUR VISITOR FROM THE PITS!

YOU BARTERED YOURSELF TO SAVE YOUR WORTHLESS VILLAGE...NOW YOU MUST PAY THE PRICE...














GUARD! GUARD! THE NEW PRISONER'S ESCAPING!
SILENCE, COWARD! WOULD YOU CALL THE HAUNTED HORDES UPON ME?
SUCH DERELICTION DOES NOT GO UNPUNISHED!
I'LL BE TAKING YOUR SWORD, KIND RODENT--
WHASS ALL THE NOISSSE ABOUT?
--AND YOUR LIFE!
FOR MERE MOMENTS, YOUNG CLAW IS TORN BY PAINFUL INDECISION--
DOES HE SEEK HIS OWN SALVATION AND THE CRIMSON GAUNTLET, OR--
BUT WITH THE NEXT HEART-PIERCING HOWL--
--HE KNOWS WHAT MUST BE DONE!
DAMN! CHIVALRY'S A CURSE!


HE COMES! SHA-GASA COMES!
SOON I SHALL GAIN THE MOST POWERFUL TALISMAN OF ALL--A DEMON SON!


THE FETID STENCH ASSAILS HER ONCE SENSITIVE NOSE!
THE SCRAPING SOUNDS OF THE SHAMBLING HORROR TEAR AT HER EARS!


AND WHEN HER NAKED SKIN FEELS ITS FIRST CLAMMY CARESS--
TRYSANNGA IS FILLED WITH BITTER SELF-REVULSION--
AS SHE PRAYS FOR THE SWEET ASYLUM OF DEATH--


SHA-GASA HAS COME!
OOZING FOUL SLIME AND MUCK IN ITS WAKE--
THE CRAWLING ABOMINATION NEARS ITS HELPLESS VICTIM!

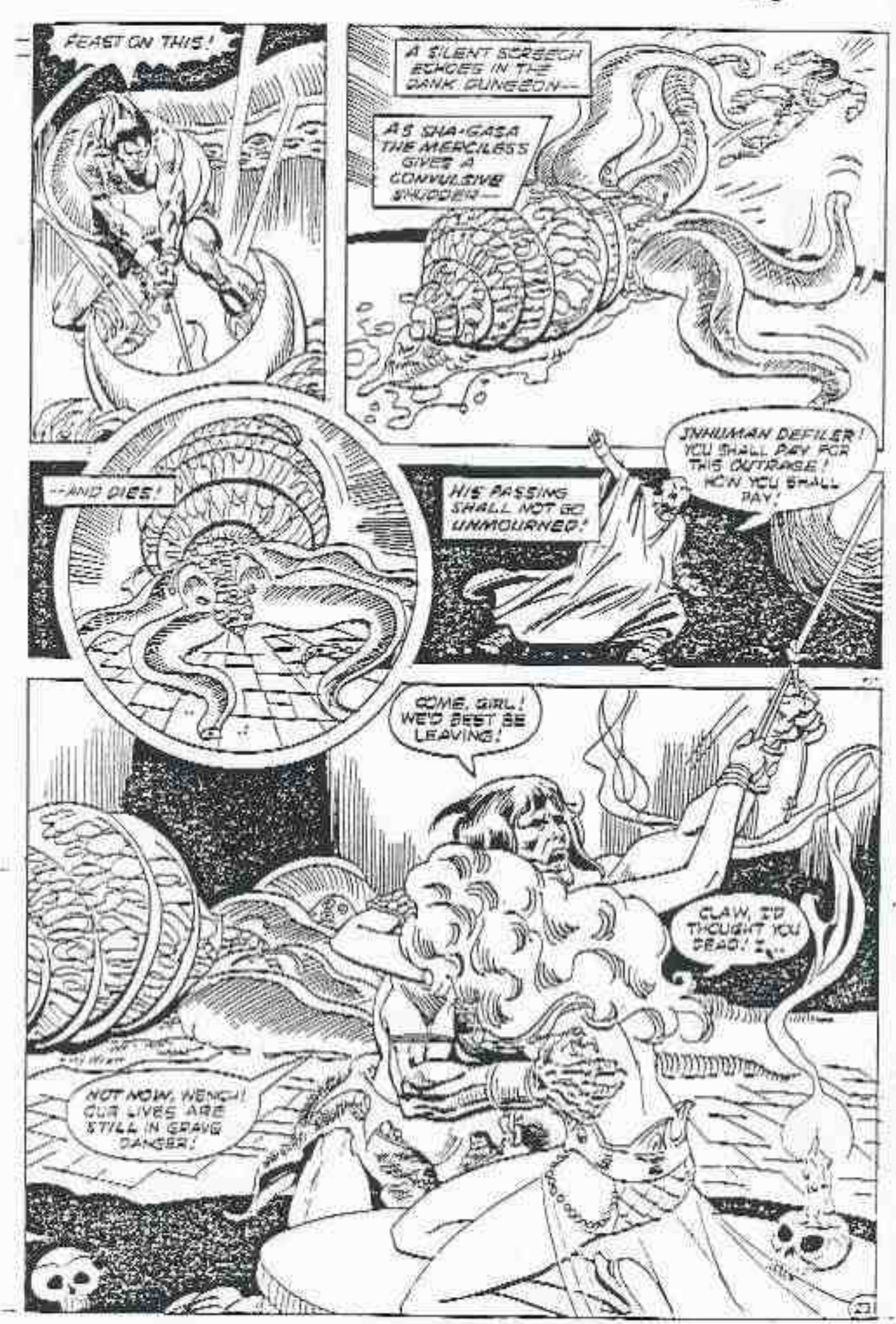

BUT BEFORE THE SALLOW-SKINNED OBSCENITY CAN REACH THE TERROR-TOSSED GIRL--
WAIT! YOU'RE NOT PERMITTED HERE! THIS IS A PRIVATE ENTERTAINMENT!


WITH NARY A GLANCE TOWARD THE WIZARD OR THE GIRL, CLAW POUNCES SAVAGELY--
--HIS DEMON HAND GOADING HIM TO MURDEROUS FURY!
21

SURRENDING FULLY TO THE BESERKER'S RAGE--
THE DARK-MANED OUTLANDER LOOSES HIS SOUL IN AN ORGY OF BLOOD!
BUT THE WRITHING SHA-GASA IS NOT WITHOUT ITS OWN FRIGHTENING RESOURCES--
BONE-CRUSHING TENDRILS ENCIRCLE THE WARRIOR--
--TENDRILS WHOSE TAINTED TOUCH TEARS AT HIS VERY ESSENCE--
--WHICH DRIVES HIM TO FURTHER FRENZY!
GO BACK TO YOUR MIRE... OR I'LL HACK YOU ALL THE WAY TO HELL!






CLAW
23
FEAST ON THIS!
A SILENT SCREECH ECHOES IN THE DANK DUNGEON--
AS SHA-GASA THE MERCILESS GIVES A CONVULSIVE SHUDDER--
--AND DIES!
HIS PASSING SHALL NOT GO UNMOURNED!
INHUMAN DEFILER! YOU SHALL PAY FOR THIS OUTRAGE! HOW YOU SHALL PAY!
COME, GIRL! WE'D BEST BE LEAVING!
CLAW, I'D THOUGHT YOU DEAD! I...
NOT NOW, WENCH! OUR LIVES ARE STILL IN GRAVE DANGER!


SOTH! VALIDARR'S ALREADY ALERTED HIS HOUSEHOLD STAFF!
IN MY CONDITION, THEY'LL SLAUGHTER US!


THE DOOR WILL SOON SHATTER AND WE'LL BE SWAMPED WITH ENEMIES!
WAP
WAP
MY LORD, THERE MAY BE HOPE...
WAP


--IF YOU DARE THE PITS WHICH SPAWNED YONDER MONSTROSITY!

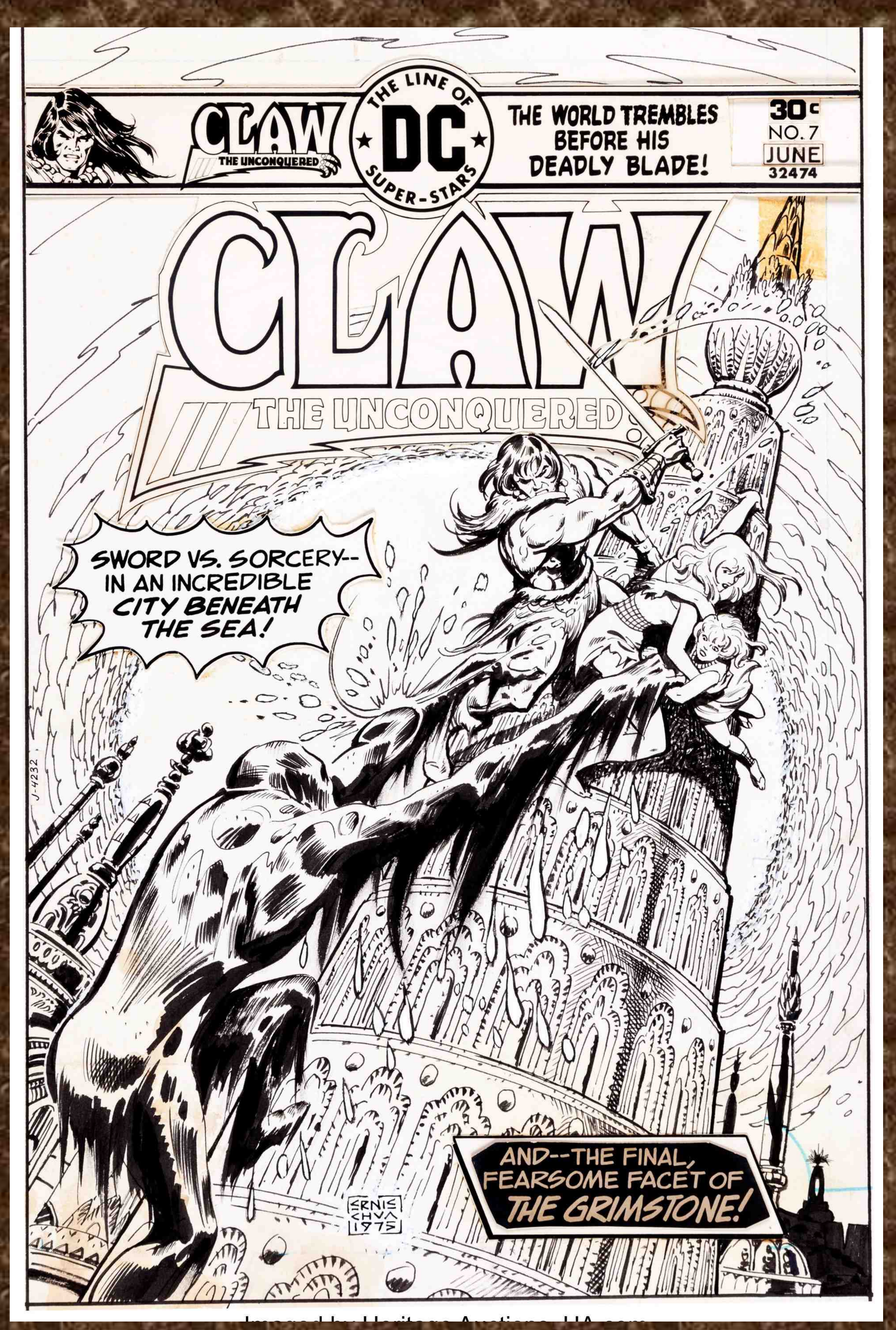

WHEN THE ALTERNATIVE IS DEATH--
I'LL GLADLY DEFY AN UNKNOWN HORROR!
THOUGH I PRAY OUR FRIEND HERE HAD NO BROTHERS!


DOWNWARD EVER DOWNWARD THEY RACE...INTO THE COOL STYGIAN DEPTHS...
THIS CORRIDOR MUST RUN THE LENGTH OF THE ENTIRE CASTLE!


HOURS PASS, UNTIL--
LISTEN--THE SOUNDS OF RUNNING WATER!
AN UNDER-GROUND STREAM!


WE'LL SWIM OUR WAY TO THE RIVER!
THEN I'LL RETURN FOR MY ENCHANTED GAUNTLET!
HEADLONG, THEY RUSH TOWARD THE CRIES OF ANXIOUS WATERS--


CLAW
25
UNTIL BLAZING TORCHES ARE UNEXPECTEDLY STRUCK--
TO REVEAL A WORLD GONE SUDDENLY AND IRREVERSIBLY--
--MAD!!!
WELCOME, GOOD PEOPLE! WELCOME TO THE LAIR OF LUNACY--
FROM WHICH YOU'LL NEVER LEAVE ALIVE!


CLAW
THE UNCONQUERED
THE LINE OF DC SUPER-STARS
THE WORLD TREMBLES BEFORE HIS DEADLY BLADE!
30c
NO. 7
JUNE
32474
CLAW
THE UNCONQUERED
SWORD VS. SORCERY-- IN AN INCREDIBLE CITY BENEATH THE SEA!
AND--THE FINAL, FEARSOME FACET OF THE GRIMSTONE!
J-4232

CLAW THE UNCONQUERED #4 N/D 1

CLAW THE UNCONQUERED

IT IS A DARK DAY IN ***KALL-RYN-DASSA,*** A MINOR TRADING SETTLEMENT COUCHED AMID THE SANDY WASTES OF SUN-RAVAGED ***PYTHARIA.*** BUT THE GREYNESS OF THE STORM-FILLED DAWN ***PALES*** BEFORE THE DARKNESS SHROUDING THE SOULS OF CERTAIN VILLAGE ***FOLK***--

--FORMER GOOD CITIZENS WHOSE ***COMPLACENCY*** HAS TURNED TO TREACHERY WITH THE PROMISE FROM A WEATHERED SHEET OF HAND-LETTERED PARCHMENT--

J-4079

--A PROMISE SOON TO BE FILLED BY GOLD, GREED ... AND ***BLOOD...***

REWARD
10,000
DREKNARS

THE COMING OF N'HGLTHSS

DAVID MICHELINIE WRITER * ERNIE CHUA PAT BOYETTE ARTISTS * JOE ORLANDO EDITOR

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CLAW THE UNCONQUERED

R.I.P.

...WHERE, FOR THE MOMENT, A DARK-MANED BARBARIAN OF THE BIRTHNAME *VALCAN*--WHOSE FEROCITY AND TWISTED RIGHT HAND HAVE EARNED THE FEARED TITLE OF *CLAW*--TAKES BRIEF RESPITE FROM THE WEARINESS OF HIS LONELY TREK, SPRAWLING AMONGST THOSE SELFSAME SHADOWS--

--APPARENTLY *UNAWARE* THAT *ONE* OF THE SILENT, COMFORTING SHAPES IS IN REALITY--

--A GRIM-BLADED HARBINGER OF *DEATH!*

J.3969

THE DOOM THAT CAME TO K'DASHA-DHEEN

WRITER: DAVID MICHELINIE

ARTIST: ERNIE CHUA

EDITOR: JOE ORLANDO

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